

MY HOUSE

CHIPS · THE · BUILDER · THREW · AWAY



EDWARD A. BRACKETT



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MY HOUSE

CHIPS THE BUILDER THREW AWAY

BY

EDWARD A. BRACKETT

AUTHOR OF "MATERIALIZED APPARITIONS," "THE WORLD
WE LIVE IN," ETC.

"Rules in art are to be departed from rather than
to be adhered to." — WASHINGTON ALLSTON



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DEDICATION

TO MY WIFE, MY CHILDREN, TO ALL, PAST AND
PRESENT, WHO HAVE ENRICHED MY LIFE WITH THEIR
AFFECTION, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

PREFACE

In 1845 I published a little volume of poems, written while engaged in my profession of Sculpture. Since then, until the past year or two, the struggle for material existence left little time or strength for literary work.

The main part of this book has been written during the past year, the recreation of my leisure hours. The poems are what an artist might call sketches, containing many lines which, in a more serious effort, would have been left out. Such pruning would, however, have destroyed the spontaneity of feeling under which they were written. The reader must, therefore, accept or reject them mainly for the ideas or sentiments which they imperfectly express.

They owe their position here to the partiality of friends who saw, or thought they saw, in them something of that individuality that attracted them to me.

It is enough for me that they were interested and that I have been able to place in their hands a reminder of that affection which alone makes life desirable.

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EARLY POEMS
1844-5

THE GROUP

A CHRISTMAS BALLAD

The parlor hall was quaint and old,
With curious carvings wrought;
The walls were hung with bas-relief
Expressive of the artist's thought.
Above the mantel was a clock,
And from the pendulum there hung
An angel with her silver wings,
That back and forward swung,
Counting seconds one by one.

On the oaken sideboard stood
The artist's silver cup,
And Isabelle with sparkling wine
Had filled the goblet up.
And now, beside the cheerful hearth
Where gleams the evening fire,
Half leaning sits the gentle maid
Beside her aged sire.

His stately form, erect and tall,
Owns not the weight of years,
Though on his high and placid brow
Are traces of his hopes and fears;
And, like a snow-white veil that floats
On every breath of air,
Adown his manly shoulders fall
His wavy locks of hair.
His quiet face, whene'er he spoke,
Was radiant with truth,
For beauty mingled with old age
The freshness of his youth.

In early days, by nature taught
The love her works impart,
He had from dreamy musings woke
To woo the plastic art.
With wondrous skill, life's varied forms
Grew fair beneath his hand,
And he had lived with joy to see
Their beauty fill the land.

Yet well he loved domestic life,
And every Christmas night
His family were gathered round
That hearthstone's cheerful light.
And now appeared a stranger youth
Who sought the sculptor's art,
And Isabelle perceived with joy
The love that filled his heart.
She begged her father would relate
The tale that he was wont to tell,
And all drew round the good old man,
The aged sire of Isabelle.

The old man gazed upon the clock,
Where to and fro the angel swung
Beneath the picture of the sun
That o'er a painted ocean hung,
And with a strange, mysterious calm,
As one who chants a solemn psalm,
With upturned face, he thus began :

“ The light came through a Gothic arch
Above the oaken door ;
The slanting ray fell on the clay,
Throwing shadows on the floor,
The stand was placed below the light,
The clay was on the stand,
The plastic clay that lifelike grew
Beneath the artist’s hand.

“ Entranced from morn till dewy eve,
Spell-bound within that room,
I shuddered when the coming night
Threw round its heavy gloom.
The chainèd lamp swung to and fro,
Sliding the shadows on the floor.
And oft I heard with muffled sound
The gusty wind twirl at the door.
Yet still I wrought, with earnest thought ;
Each touch betrayed the skill
By which I formed from lifeless clay
A creature of my will.

“ I backward drew that I might view
The shaping of the whole,
And closed my eyes that I might see
The image in my soul —
That soul to simple truth once wed,
How wild, discordant now !
No lovely vision therein dwelt,
No calmness on my brow ;
But like a crowd of evil forms
That one by one depart,
The rushing pulses upward leapt
From chambers of my heart.

“ Where from the clay the shadow lay
Beneath the dusky light,
A something stirred ; a changing shape ;
It turned, and rose upright.
So dim the shape, I scarce had turned
To note what it might be,
When o’er my frame a chillness came, —
I trembled fearfully.

Ah, well I knew the work to do:
The form that chained my heart
In plastic earth must needs have birth;
It would not else depart.

“ I well remember, in my brain
There was a burning heat;
With heavy bound, within my breast
My heart convulsive beat.
A whirling sound was in my ears,
My head seemed larger grown,
My eyes were red, though free from tears,
My hands seemed not my own.
So changed was everything to me
Within that dim-lit hall,
That in my fancy oft I saw
Strange shadows on the wall.
A marble Cupid on the shelf,
A pretty little thing,
With full round face and roguish eyes
Half hid beneath its wing,
Had thrilled my breast with strange delight,

But now it looked a sprite !
A wicked sprite that flapped its wings
And danced amid the light.

“ The specter changed, its form grew dim
And slid into the clay,
The deep red clay that on the stand
A moulded statue lay.
The statue moved, and writhed, and turned ;
It grew to wondrous size ;
Cheeks lank and thin, with fiendish grin ;
Fierce gleamed those sculptured eyes.

“ The chisel dropped, my arm dropped down,
All senseless hung my hand,
My knees seemed fast together bound,
I scarce had power to stand.
That ghastly form convulsed with pain,
The look of that accursèd head,
As 't were hot rain fell on my brain, —
I shrank with utter dread,
As one who dreams a horrid dream,

Yet hath no power to call,
I grasped my throat and tried to scream
And reeled against the wall.

“ Nay, shrink not thus, — no human blood
This hand hath ever shed;
For me no ghost in spectral shroud
Hath left the quiet dead.

“ The blood had curdled in my veins,
Nigh unto death I lay;
That night the fiend had power o’er me
Nor left me with the day.
Within my mind there was a blank,
A dreary dismal cloud,
Through which no ray of light appeared,
’Twas round me like a shroud.
I only knew, at times, a sense
Of better feeling came,
And once I thought I heard a voice,
Sweet voice that breathed my name,

And dimly saw in clouds of light,
Her hands upon her breast, —
An angel form, with drooping eyes,
That seemed with grief oppressed.

“ The hour I left that dismal room
Is still unknown to me.
I found myself a league away
Mid rocks that skirt the sea.
The dew distilled upon my cheek,
Where, stretched upon the ground,
I lay beneath a stormy sky.
The ocean’s moaning sound
Fell heavy on my ear and seemed
To shake the cliffs around.

“ I rose and staggered to the beach :
The spray dashed in my face,
The sand lay stretched along the reach
Far as the eye could trace.
A boat was riding near the shore,
The sail across it flung,

And safe amid the ocean's roar
Upon the waves it swung.

“ Scarce knowing what I did, save that
I fled with trembling fear
From some strange fiend, all shadow-like,
Who followed me so near
That, with hot breath and hissing sound
He whispered in my ear.

“ I loosed the sail ; the boat moved on
Before the rushing wind,
The white foam wreathed the vessel's prow,
The eddies whirled behind.
Low bent the mast as bends a reed
When tempests sweep the vale ;
Deep lay the boat and gurgling danced
The surge upon her rail.
How swift we clove the yeasty wave !
The white loon left her bed
And rushing, circling, through the air,
Screamed wildly overhead.

A thousand spectral eyes gleamed up
From out the wat'ry track,
The fierce shark crossed the foam-lit prow
And turned upon his back.

“ Still on my ear the whisper came,
Still came that fiendish form
Chasing the boat as though he were
A demon of the storm.
That night the moon, the full round moon,
Came up from out the sea,
Awhile upon the ocean's verge
It fiercely gazed on me.
It was a fearful sight I know,
That blood-red moon to see:
The lurid ray gleamed on the spray,
And with one mighty voice
A thousand leaping waves, beneath
Its light, seemed to rejoice.

“ The wind went down ; the boat kept on
Drifting upon the sea.

The dull red moon now brighter shone
And looked less angrily.
In the distance, dimly seen,
Like clouds along the sky,
A changing host of shadowy forms
Were fading from the eye;
While up the east in robes of light
The rosy morn drew nigh.
Still drifting on, the heavy swell
Bore me onward toward the shore.
Great God! it was a pleasant thing
To reach the land once more.

“ As one recalls a pleasant dream,
So in my memory
There dwells a vision of a form,
A maiden watching me.
That gentle maid was young and fair,
A lovely minister;
A holy feeling fills my heart
Whene'er I think of her.

She sang to me the sweetest lay
That e'er to lute was sung ;
The music sank into my heart —
Oh, never flowed from mortal tongue
Such heavenly strains of melody
As through my chamber rung !

“ She laid her hand upon my brow,
My fevered brain grew calm ;
There was a magic in the touch
Of that gentle maiden's palm.
Still peering through the deepening gloom,
I saw that wicked fiend ;
The gentle maiden stood between,
As on my couch she leaned.

“ Her dark blue eyes, all tenderly,
Beneath their fringes shone,
A diamond cross hung from a chain,
And diamonds clasped her zone.
Dear, heavenly maid, no artist's skill
Thy beauty can define ;

Thou didst look in upon my soul,
My soul looked in on thine.

“ She stood between me and the light,
The first gray tints of dawn;
Wide spreading from the cottage door
Lay stretched a sloping lawn.
She beckoned me and tremblingly
I rose. The morning air
Played with the curls upon her brow,
Bright curls of golden hair.

“ ‘ Thou who didst watch me through the night,
Now whither dost thou guide
My steps along this pleasant vale ? ’
The maiden thus replied : —
‘ Thou dost behold how, from the light,
The darkness steals away ;
Anon, up come the rosy tints,
The first faint blush of day.’

“ ‘ I see the light, but in the west
 Black mist the sky hath screened ;
So standest thou before my face —
 Behind, a shadowy fiend.
Oh, say ! shall aught of deed or thought
 Make my sad spirit whole ? ’

“ ‘ Look to the light, emblem of life ;
 ’Twill dawn upon thy soul.
No virtuous act was ever lost,
 Though all unknown the deed.
Good angels keep a record where
 No mortal eye may read.
Oh, keep thy heart from wicked thoughts
 That haunt the spirit so ;
They, like our shadows, follow us
 Where’er we choose to go.’

“ Still on we went through sloping vales,
 Beneath the sun’s warm beam,
Until we reached a shady nook
 Beside a winding stream.

The stream flowed near a pine-clad hill,
The hill that cast a shade
Whene'er the sun dipped to the west
Across that quiet glade.

“ Stretched on a bed of moss I lay;
A vine-wove canopy
Above me hung and while I slept
An angel looked on me.
I woke and trembling gazed around:
Once more I was alone,
But round my neck and waist were bound
The diamond cross and zone.
Above my head a milk-white dove
Sat on a leafless tree,
And ere I rose he fluttering came
And perched upon my knee.

“ The sound of rills, the song of birds
Fell sweetly on my ear;
My heart beat with unbounded love,
Pure love that knew no fear.

Oh, happy hour! No wicked fiend
My feeble steps to trace!
There walks an angel by my side,
He looks me in the face.

“ So shall the love of Nature wake
The pleasant dreams of youth,
And by thy side, with gentle look,
Shall walk the angel Truth.

“ The artist hath an inward power.
The visions of his mind
Will never let him rest until
Some outward shape they find.
Whate'er his varied groups express,
In all that he doth mould,
He sees the reflex of himself
In plastic beauty told.
The downward weight of evil thoughts
Hangs lead-like round his heart,
But like a bird, the soul upsprings
Whene'er these thoughts depart.

“ Again I sought that Gothic room,
Gazed calmly on the clay,
The deep red clay, that on the stand
An evil statue lay.
There, day by day, all flood-like came
The light of inward thought,
And calm above that crouching shape
An angel form I wrought.
He bends above the prostrate foe,
In either hand a chain.
No outward power hath touched that fiend,
Yet doth he writhe in pain.

“ But, yonder is the massive door
That leadeth to the hall,
And thou shalt see the Group, that fills
The alcove in the wall.”

Fair Isabelle, with maiden grace,
Now threads the corridor
And near her walks the stranger youth;
The maiden glides before.

Her lily hand the taper holds;
 Behind, the shadows fall
Like gloomy phantoms of the past
 Upon the damp, cold wall.

But they have reached the vestibule
 And, tremblingly, old Arthur Gray
Hath swung the massive door aside,
 And lo, the hall before them lay —
The sculptor's hall! Who shall describe
 The beauty of that stately room?
Where all seems life, yet silent as
 The speechless tenants of the tomb.

On either side the open door
 A lovely group of angels stood
With folded hands and drooping eyes
Beneath the mellow light that shed
 The dusky shadows on the floor.
Now breathless pass the visitors
 Beneath the wings above them spread,
Under the high, o'er-arching dome

With frescoed stars bedight,
And by the center column pause.
Two wingèd cherubs, arm in arm,
Upon that marble column stand ;
Half leaning on a flowery vase
Each holds a taper in his hand.
And standing by the graceful plinth,
An ottoman, inlaid
With curious carvings, quaint and old,
Of dusky walnut made.

“ Here rest awhile. Dear Isabelle,
The harp is at the angels’ feet :
’T would please thy sire if, gently now,
Thou would’st thy evening hymn repeat.
She took the harp, the golden harp,
And never dewy twilight stole
With holier calm o’er folding flowers
Than that sweet music on the soul.

O, ye who love not simple art,
Deem not the old man weak

If, listening to that Christmas hymn,
A tear stole down his cheek.

The trembling harp is laid aside,
The crimson curtain raised,
And silently upon that group
The youthful stranger gazed.
So much of life, of living truth,
Appears in every line,
It wakes a train of dreamy thoughts
That words may not define.

Who hath not stood whole hours to view
Some lovely work of art
And felt the very stillness chide
The beating of his heart ?
No idle talk, no fulsome praise,
The truly full heart knows,
But like a deep and hidden stream
The inward feeling flows.
We pause, and lingering turn away
To mingle in the strife

Of busy trade, the love of gain,
"And all that man calls life."

How strange do seem the pent-up streets!
How rush the crowds on either side!
And forms, familiar to the mind,
Like shadows o'er the pavement glide.
Long years may pass, yet back we turn
As to some dream of youth
And feel, for once, our hearts have been
In unison with Truth.

NOTE. — This ballad was written soon after completing a life-size group* of the "Archangel chaining Satan," and was intended to express something of that obsession which every artist or actor feels while absorbed in his work.

It was subsequently read, by request, at the anniversary of the Eurosophian Adelphi of Water-ville College, August 12, 1845.

* As no one wanted the Devil chained, the group was broken up.

LINES SUGGESTED ON FINISHING
A BUST OF ALLSTON

Upward unto the living light
Intensely thou dost gaze,
As if thy very soul would seek
In that far distant maze
Communion with those heavenly forms
That, lifting to the sight
Their golden wings and snowy robes,
Float on a sea of light.

Anon, far, far away they glide,
Shooting through realms of bliss,
Till from the spirit's eye they fade
In Heaven's own bright abyss.
Such are the visions thou dost wake;
Such are the thoughts that rise
In him who, 'neath thy upturned brow,
Beholds thy searching eyes.

There is no stain upon that brow
Where once the glow of life
With more than earthly beauty shone, —
Within, no wasting strife.
How strangely have the swift hours flown,
As o'er the shapeless pile
I poured the strength of my full soul,
Lost to all else the while.

When fell the last faint stroke which told
That thou and I should part,
That all of life that I could give
Was thine, how throbbed my heart!
Yet to this head that I have formed
Should aught of praise belong,
Not unto me the merit due,
But him who made me strong;

Who ever lent his fostering care
My wayward steps to guide
Through paths of flowers in beauty clothed,
Along life's sunny tide.
Thou who wast good and kind and great,
Thy task on earth is done;
Of those who walked in beauty's light,
Thou wast the chosen one.

THE WATER LILY

How bright upon the rippling tide
The snow-white lilies bloom!
As, swaying there in stately pride,
They smile above the gloom.

See, like joyous things of life,
Their upturned faces glow,
Regardless of the water's strife,
Its dark and sullen flow.

As pure as snowflakes from the skies,
The buds, expanding wide,
Upon the surface gently rise
And sway above the tide.

Lo, Nature lifts her fairest flower
From out the dark steel wave,
The rainbow shines amid the shower,
The rose blooms o'er the grave.

Thus sweetly in the morn of life
Hope's fairest flow'rets bloom
Unmindful of the bitter strife
That shrouds the heart in gloom.

LATER POEMS

MY HOUSE

This moving house that you call me
Is growing old, and I can see
That it is weak, and here and there
I find some things beyond repair.
You err in thinking it is me,
For I am what you cannot see.
Within, I tread the well-worn floor,
Or stand beside my prison door
That outward swung in days of yore :
'Tis useless now, it swings no more.
Without my house, I see nor hear
Some things that once to me were dear,
And o'er my roof the chilly flow
Of winter piles its drifts of snow.
Yet all within is still aglow
With earnest life, and everything
Wears on its face the joy of spring.

ONWARD

“ Courage! ” she said, as with the oar
She pushed our frail bark from the shore.
Below, we heard the rush and roar
Of waves that dashed and flung their spray,
And drenched with mist the morning air.

The murky clouds rolled overhead,
In weird forms they shift and spread,
And filled us with a nameless dread.
The doubts and fears that lead astray
These soulless things are everywhere.

Who evil thinks shall evil know,
The poison through his veins will flow.
To what he feeds on he will grow,
And his whole life shall writhe and play
With fancied fraud — his daily fare.

Unchecked by wind or wave, we steer
Between these fiends of doubt and fear:

At our approach they disappear,
As shrinks the night before the day.
They are the victims of despair.

The clouds no longer shift and play
Beneath the noonday's blinding ray.
With earnest hope we thread our way —
Whate'er may call we may not stay :
Who knows this life must feel its care.

All things must change. We hear no more
The angry waters lash the shore ;
We have no need of sail or oar ;
The setting sun with lessening ray
No longer blinds us with its glare.

Still floats our bark upon the tide,
The one dear friend still by my side.
Whatever else may shift or glide,
Love holds within its gentle sway
All things for which we hope or care.

THE BROOK

From out the clefted rock there springs
A little brook that laughs and sings;
A silver thread that curves and trails
'Tween mossy banks, through wooded vales.

And where its waters gently flow,
The cowslip and the lilies grow,
And 'neath the boulder, from his lair,
The spotted trout leaps in the air.

The whirling eddies softly press
The drooping fern, the water cress;
And where the willow sways and swings,
The wild bird builds her nest and sings.

I backward turned when I was young;
Thoughtlessly I laughed and sung,
And careless of the passing hours
I trod thy banks and gathered flowers

With one who was more dear to me
Than all things else may ever be.
'Twas early morn, not eventide;
Spring flowers bloomed on either side.

So wrapped in her, and she in me,
We did not think, — we did not see
That it was but the opening day,
And like the stream would pass away.

The budding life so fresh and fair,
The dreamy eyes undimmed by care,
The graceful mien, the heaving breast
That rose and fell with love's unrest,

And like the water's rippling flow,
The voice was ever soft and low.
There is no curve or play of line
That beauty claims that was not thine.

As many a one has done before,
We missed our way, and never more

Through all our lives the rich refrain
Of our young love came back again.

What changes come ! Who has not seen
The shifting shadows slide between
Our cherished hopes, — what we were then,
What we are now, what might have been ?

'Tis autumn now : the trees are bare,
A touch of winter in the air,
And where the willows swayed and swung,
There are no birds to rear their young.

Leaves strew the ground, the flowers are dead,
And over all the scene are spread
The phantoms of a thousand things :
Only the brook still laughs and sings.

O laughing brook, thy song, thy gleam,
Is like a half-remembered dream.
In caverns deep beneath the earth,
Unseen, unknown, thou hadst thy birth.

I wonder not at thy sweet voice,
That all unchecked thou dost rejoice;
For thine the joy that freedom gains
In triumph o'er its broken chains.

IMPROMPTU

TO WALTER

Still we are here. The world may say
That you and I have had our day —
The strenuous life, the shifting play
Of youth, of manhood and decay.
Still gleams the memory of the days,
The buoyant days, when we were young,
And Hope and Fear alternate swung
The golden light, the dusky shade
Across the path where then we strayed.
And later still our growing needs
Of robust strength that always pleads
For manly thoughts and noble deeds;
The burning noon that never flings
A shadow over earthly things.
But ah! the changes 'twixt now and then,
When we were boys, — when we were men.

The sun drops down ; the coming night
Is but the blinding of our sight,
And seeing not, through fear and doubt
We think our lives are fading out.
With earnest hope we pause and wait.
We may not say who first shall leave,
Or who remain to mourn and grieve ;
We only know that love shall live,
That Nature still her web will weave
Of golden light o'er all we give.
For what we give, — with others share, —
Is all we have, is what we are.
These trembling limbs, this altered gait,
These battered forms so wrecked and worn,
Are but the shells we have outgrown, —
A prison house whose bars shall slide.
The caged bird, freed, with joyous pride
Shall cleave the air and sing outside.

ALWAYS PRESENT

With a look I could not fathom,
With a light that was divine,
Tenderly she gazed upon me,
Laid her pallid face on mine.

Like the misty dews of evening
Her great eyes were full of tears,
Down her cheeks they flowed and trembled
As she tried to calm my fears.

“Let no sorrow blind thy vision ;
Only but a little time
When the clouds shall part between us ;
Through all changes I am thine.

“Let our errors be forgotten ;
They are weeds that we have sown,
Stalks on which no flowers blossom.
Love and Hope are all we own.”

Patiently she waited, lingered,
Talking with me day by day
Till the time came for the parting;
Lovingly she passed away.

There are times when all our feelings
Center in the dreary chill;
That our friends who have departed
Leave a void that naught can fill.

Blindly over all things changing,
Passing to the great unknown,
In our ignorance we sorrow,
O'er the lifeless form we moan.

With our hopes and aspirations
Darker thoughts may intervene,
Still the world is full of beauty
Flowing from a life unseen.

Many things are only seeming;
Not a sorrow shall remain
O'er the splendor of our being,
O'er the life we all can gain.

Not the shadows but the sunlight
Fills us with the perfect day,
Leads us to the life immortal;
All things else shall pass away.

All around us forms are drifting,
Floating, gliding, always near;
Though our eyes may never see them
Still we know that they are here.

Often in my quiet study,
When the lamp is burning low,
There is one who sits beside me,
Parted from me long ago.

Not more certain flows life's current,
Or the things I touch and see,
Than the glory of her presence
With the love she brings to me.

ERE THOU ART OLD

The dreams of youth, the calm of age,
Are all recorded on life's page
With the things that first begun
When this planet rolled and swung
In its circle round the sun ;
When the blending atoms whirled
Building up this changing world,
Building up this little shell
Of a house wherein we dwell.

In the onward sweep of time,
Bearing to some unknown clime,
Is this conscious self of thine.
Not more sure the stars shall shine
Through the vast sidereal plain,
Than this conscious life of thine
All its fullness shall retain.

Be thyself, for none can own
Or claim the splendor of thy throne.
The elements may round thee rave,
Thou canst never be their slave,
Nor aught except what comes to thee
To make thy individuality.

Yet in thy life thou dost rehearse
All that makes the universe.
The myriad forms through space unrolled,
In their beauty manifold,
Shall come to thee ere thou art old,
Ere the shadows of decay
Warn thee of the passing day.

LOVE KNOWS ITS OWN

This craggy peak on which I stand
O'erlooks the far-off wooded land,
And through the rocky glen below
I see a mighty river flow:
With dancing foam and shouts of glee
It rushes onward to the sea;
The boundless sea where all we know
Is lost beneath its ceaseless flow.
Forever runs the turbid tide
That bears along our hopes and fears,
Our self-conceit, our foolish pride
That wanes not with the passing years.
How little of our lives remain!
The river ne'er returns again;
The rugged rock on which I stand
Is slowly crumbling into sand;
From this lone peak, dim is the trail
That leads us through the misty vale.

The river flows,
The south wind blows,
Sing high, sing low.
Where'er I go
The swelling bud, the opening flower,
All things beneath us or above,
Bend to thy throne, O Sacred Love.

From out the groves, early and late,
Some happy bird calls to his mate.
But I, — ah me! all day I sing
And no one comes. Yet this is spring.
“Are all the birds more blest than I?”
The voice was like the plaintive cry
Of some lone spirit floating by.

While yet the notes were in the air
She came, I know not whence or where —
Love takes no heed of time or place,
It knows its own when face to face.
There is no thought, howe'er expressed,
That does not find a place of rest;

No yearning soul, whate'er its state,
That does not somewhere find its mate.
As turns the lily to the sun
When morning light around it plays,
With trembling step and timid gaze
She turned to me and we were one.
"Dear Friend," I said, "wilt thou abide?
Then journey with me, side by side,
Though rough the road and oft astray.
As swings yon star above the night,
So Hope shall lead and Love shall light
Our steps along the widening way.
I lay my head upon thy breast
And feel I am supremely blest.
I drink the glory of thine eyes,
I press thy lips, thy hand in mine,
For thou art mine and I am thine.
And thus together we shall rise
Above the turmoil and the strife
Of changing things miscalled our life.

No more I stand upon the crest
Where rolls the river to the sea,
For I accept the full bequest
Of that rich life thou givest me;
So much to thy great soul I owe.
Through parting clouds a light is shed
That weaves a halo round thy head.
The heavens shall ope and thou shalt see
The splendor of thy love for me.

Unseen they come, with muffled tread;
I hear their voices whisper low,
And looking upward, I behold
In dreams, as Jacob did of old,
Love's messengers pass to and fro.

PASSED AWAY

Now close the door, put out the light,
For I would be alone tonight.
'Tis fitting I should feel the stress
Of my great loss, its loneliness.
If, in my weakness, I have said
There is no life now he is dead,
I do recall it, for I know
That all is life and nought is dead.
'Tis not his loss but all my own.
For many years full well I've known
His manly strength, the gentle tone
Of his rich life, his kindly deeds,
His sympathy with all our needs.
Nor this alone: it was my pride
That we could journey side by side,
And in our harmony to find
The working of his inner mind,
That conscious self that still survives
All changes of our earthly lives.

How blindly flows the flood of grief
That gives the lie to our belief,
For these sad things are only seeming,
In our true life they have no meaning.
This house, that once had served him well,
Is only, now, an empty shell;
The bird is flown, the nest is bare.
From his new home we still may share,
Through all our lives, his loving care.
What we may think, may never be,
For life is what we feel and see.
I only know what comes to me;
And here, in all its beauty, lay
The strength, the love, the gentle sway
Of that great soul that's passed away.

UPWARD

Everything with life is teeming,
Nothing lacking in its meaning;
Songs of birds that are testing
Coy mates, while they are nesting.
Yielding petals droop and close
Round the stamens of the rose;
Fragrant comes the wind that weaves
Slender branches with the leaves,
Through the pine trees, whispering, sighing,
O'er the blossoms that are dying.

Nature fills us with surprise,
Cheats us with her seeming lies,
Bids us ope our wondering eyes;
Shows the sun come up the east,
Then slowly drop into the west.
Never sun or planet yet
Ever rose or ever set.

Only in our inner being
Lies the fullness of our seeing.
Like the chime of evening bells
That in the distance floats and swells,
There is music everywhere,
With its rhythm all unbroken,
Floating, trembling in the air.

There are many thoughts unspoken,
Dreamy thoughts, all too tender
For our coarser words to render.
Whether it be friend or lover,
Little do we know each other.
What thou canst feel and know and see
Is all there is of life for thee.
Beyond thy little range of sight
A million forms glow in the light.

Slowly come the changing years,
 Mixing up our hopes and fears
Till, at last, the curtains rise:
 Through the cloud rifts gleam the skies,
Richly falls the evening light,
 Silent, blending into night.
Gentle as a little child
 That on its mother's bosom smiled,
From this tenement of clay,
 From the conflict and the strife
Of this mortal prison life,
 Upward thou shalt cleave thy way.

REMINISCENCE

Softly blows the evening breeze
O'er waving grass, through leafy trees —
The trembling air that gently weaves
A music like the murmuring seas
Where the waters slide and reach
Up and down the sandy beach.
Here we walked and talked together,
But in all our talking, never
Did we say we loved each other.

Was it Fancy with its gleaming,
Mocking, only, with its seeming?
Was it Love with its sweet dreaming
That led us onward, side by side,
Thoughtless of all else beside?
Love is blind, it never sees.
You may call it what you please —
'Twas enough that in our pleasure
We had found a priceless treasure
That no other life could measure,

Lifting up our sense of seeing
All the glory of our being.
Not alone the simple blending

Of our lives with love unending,
But a love that richly gives
A beauty over all that lives.
With our selfishness denying,
Heart to heart, with soul replying,
In the beautiful spring weather
Hand in hand we walked together,
And the angels never knew
Aught of love that was more true.

Ah, the days when we were young,
When the buds and flowers swung
With their fragrance everywhere!
Feathered songsters chirped and sung,
With their music filled the air,
And our lives were free from care.
Little did we think or know
Of that never ceasing flow
That changes all things here below.

Stalks that bud and bloom today
On the morrow shall decay.
Yet today is full of meaning, —
No less beautiful its seeming
Than the one that's passed away.
'Tis our blindness in not seeing,
Never thinking, never knowing
That these changes are the flowing,
Never ceasing, outward flowing
From another state of being;
They can have no other meaning.

Bound by age yet strong in spirit,
From the love I still inherit
From the dear one passed away,
Conscious of her gentle sway,
Growing stronger day by day,
How can I think, how can I say
From my life she's passed away.

SPRINGTIME

The early morn with coming light
 In splendor rides above the night.
The rayless gloom that barred our way
 In ghostly silence steals away,
And once again our eyes behold
 The beauty of this changing world.

We bare our foreheads to the breeze,
 We listen to the hum of bees,
The music of the restless leaves,
 The blending sounds that far and near
Like murmuring waves break on the ear.

Ere yet shall come the leafy June,
 The happy birds with love shall tune
Their throats and soar and sing.
 The bending flowers, in silent prayer,
Shall breathe their fragrance on the air.

The rosy morn, the budding life
 Of happy youth, so full and free,
So careless of all things that be,
 Its airy castles flash and gleam,
The mirage of a fevered dream —
 Of idle thoughts that float and play
And shift and drift and pass away.

All things are thine, O gentle Spring;
 The birds shall build their nests and play,
The dream of youth shall have its day,
 Its joys, its sorrows, and its pride.
Only its memory shall abide.

When youth is gone, how dreamy then
 We backward turn to what has been,
And wistfully, with weary eyes,
 We scan the heavens, the changing sky,
And plead for light. There's no reply —
 Not here the answering visions rise.

Not what we dream or may believe,
But what we know, shall net and weave
The fullness of the lives we live.

Our thoughts and deeds are never sown
On barren soil, in land unknown ;

Our duties here are all we own ;
For what we feel and know and see
Is all there is for you and me.

The listless mind may fail to find
The beauty that forever springs
From out the unseen world and flings
A glory over all that life can give.
There is no great, there is no small,
Love spreads its golden light on all.
How rich the song that Nature sings ;
As perfect in the things that crawl
As in the man who proudly swings
His scepter over earthly things.

THE WRECK

Stood the captain, firm, erect,
 On the rolling, pitching deck.
Walked the captain, fore and aft,
 Master of his little craft,
Trod the deck, with anxious eye
 Looking upward at the sky
Where the weird clouds were drifting by.
 With the wild winds raging free
Bent the mast, swelled the sail,
 Water foaming o'er the rail,

Ploughed the vessel through the sea,
 Through the dashing and the roar
Of the waves that lash the shore,
 Where runs the ragged, rocky ledge
All along the water's edge.
 Dimly shone the beacon light
Through the darkness of the night.
 Not all the prayers of all who pray
Can lift the gloom that round him lay,

Or change the darkness into day.
Not for himself came doubt and fear,
But for those who, far more dear,
Helpless in the cabin lay.

Walked the captain fore and aft,
No longer master of his craft.
All the hope, the joy, the pain,
That he ever felt or knew,
Hurtled through his fevered brain.

Over the wearied, helpless crew
Ripped the sails, like ribbons flew,
Streaming, snapping in the gale;
And above the broken rail,

Without stays or spar, the mast
Bent and trembled, and at last,
Yielding to the angry blast,
Broke and crashed into the sea.

O'er the fast retreating storm
That, like the Arab, stole away,
Shrinking from the light of day,
Broke the morning with its calm.
Resistless rolled the onward swell
Of waves that ceaseless rose and fell.
Within the storm-tossed bay
Drifted forms, here and there,
With pallid face and floating hair,
Mocking life with vacant stare.
While up the beach, beyond the reach
Of the restless, foaming tide,
Where the wreckage had been piled,
Without pulse, without breath,
Folded in the arms of death,
Lay the mother with her child.
Not in garb of fashion dressed,
But in the beauty God expressed
When he made all mankind
In the glory of His mind.

STRAY THOUGHTS

Many are the thoughts that gain
Possession of a fevered brain;
Fleeting as an April day,
All uncertain is their stay.
Joyfully the sunlight gleams,
Sporting o'er our youthful dreams.
All the world with beauty teems;
It is our recklessness that sows
Thorns that nestle neath the rose.
Dreary clouds may shift and spread
Rolling darkly overhead,
Chilly winds around us blow
Piling up the drifting snow.

Changing, comes the leafy June,
Singing quite another tune:
With the whispering of the breeze
Dance the leaves upon the trees;

Song of birds, the opening flowers,
Light with love the shady bowers.
Would that we could always know
All the beauty and the flow
Of these things that come and go.
Be ye thoughtful, be ye wise,
Check the passions as they rise;
Angry thoughts unbidden start,
Tear the fibers of the heart.
Backward you may turn and say
"All my life was led astray."

Many things should be forgotten:
They were fancies ill-begotten,
Chips the builders threw away.
Not tomorrow nor today,
But in the moments as they play,
Life shall bud and have its sway.
Not today canst thou say
Thou art the same as yesterday.

Roll the planets round the sun
But never since the world begun
In the same path have they run.
Softly flows the rich refrain
Of the dreams that once have been,
Figments only of the brain,
Dreams that never come again.

Sturdy stands the mountain oak,
Bares its forehead to the stroke
Of the gleaming thunder-bolt.
In the battle and the strife,
In the onward march of life,
Firmly meet thy destiny.
Never canst thou dare to be
Less brave than yonder tree.
In the life that here is thine
Be always on the firing line;
Never canst thou once decline
To meet the foeman face to face —
Never soldier looks behind.

There are those who think they find
That, because we change our dress,
We are old, — are growing less.
These garments may be sadly worn,
But day by day more rich unfolds
The life within their ample folds.

To those who feel and see aright
Not less beautiful the night
That silent waits the coming morn.
It is folly in our seeing
Things that really have no meaning
That ever makes our misery.
Were we truthful, were we free,
All the sorrows that might be
Could be thrown into the sea.

LISTENING

In the woods the birds are singing,
 Flitting round from limb to limb,
And my soul is full of music,
 Running over at the rim.

Yet my heart is reaching, yearning,
 For a song I cannot hear.
Well I know it floats around me
 And at times comes very near.

Over all the night is falling,
 And the stars are in the sky;
Summer breezes softly breathing
 Whisper as they pass me by.

Silently the moon is rising,
 Climbing up the hazy sky,
And so near it floats above me
 I can reach it where I lie.

Like a restless bird rejoicing,
 Freely I can cleave the air ;
Upward rising, onward drifting,
 Leave behind all earthly care.

For our thoughts and aspirations
 That forever outward spring, —
Ever present, never ceasing, —
 Make us one with every thing.

And our joys and sorrows blending
 With our love, we all can see
Something of the life we're nearing
 That will come to you and me.

Still my soul is yearning, listening,
 For the song I cannot hear,
For the ever-flowing music
 Of a life that's always near.

TO MY FRIEND CHARLES HALLOCK

If thou hast eyes that thou canst see
The glory of all things that be,
The myriad forms that float between
Thee and the world we call unseen,
Thou hast the key to that rich life
That knows not fear, nor doubt, nor strife.

TODAY

Life is a battle, and the strife
Ends only with our earthly life.
The bugle call is in the air ;
The rush, the conflict, everywhere,
And none but cowards fail to share
In all that makes us what we are, —
The forward march, the onward trend
Of all things to some certain end.
In vain we seek to turn aside
The onward sweep of that great tide
That bears us to our destiny.
There is no hope, there is no rest
For those who fail to do their best ;
Peace only comes to those who see
That they keep step in harmony
With all that is or yet may be.

Why should we wish or care to know
 Why all is changing here below ;
Why outward life should ebb and flow,
 Or why our thoughts should shift and sway
And like our dreams should pass away ?
 We backward turn and lingering yearn
For that which never can return.
 For, all our life, our sense of being
Lies in the fullness of our seeing —
 Not the fleeting things we borrow,
Or the phantoms of tomorrow,
 But the splendor and the play
Of that rich life that's here today.

THE COTTAGE BY THE SEA

It was long, ah, long ago !

I cannot tell you why 'twas so —
It might have been that restless feeling
In our youthful days revealing
Something of a sense of seeing
That life should never be alone,
That hearts are pleading for their own.

Strolling, in this restless mood,
Where a low-roofed cottage stood,
Where the lengthened shadows lay,
Phantoms of the passing day,
Suddenly, before me stood
A gentle form of maidenhood.

Startled like a timid fawn,
Fled she down the grassy lawn
To the cottage by the sea.

Never backward did I see
That she turned to look at me.
From that moment I was changed
And my vision wider ranged.

Never came to me again
The thoughtless boy that I had been.
Bolts and bars, nothing known,
Keep the lover from his own :
In the golden autumn weather,
Hand in hand we strolled together.

What we said, or thought, or did,
Beneath the veil of love was hid ;
Sacred as our sense of being
Are the dreams that love is seeing.
From within, outward flowing,
Is all the love that's worth the knowing.

Shadows falling from without
Poison love with fear and doubt,

Wake a yearning loneliness
That no words can e'er express.
Even she who dwelt with me
In the cottage by the sea,
In her heaving, throbbing breast,
Showed how great was her unrest.

She was simple in her bearing,
Little for the fashions caring;
You might pass her any day
And never think or care to say
That she differed from her race,
Or was more than commonplace.

Yet 'neath the fringes of her eyes
Gleamed the light of southern skies.
Never love was more intense
Or richer in its eloquence,
Than the love that came to me
From the loved one by the sea.

Oft we walked hand in hand
O'er the sea-floor's level sand,
On its surface traced and planned
All we thought that there should be
In the cottage by the sea.

Here we lived and loved and sung
When the world to us was young,
In an age of hope and doubt,
World within and world without,
All so closely inter-blended
None could tell where either ended.

If we had our little spats
'Twas not of gowns or flaring hats,
But from that foolish innate pride
That brushed, at times, all else aside.

All our peace lay in not seeing
Things that we could not agree in;
That the fullness of our love
In its strength should rise above
All such false, discordant feeling.

Like the lightning's heated glare,
 Pulsing through the evening air
With its changing, fitful gleams,
 Flashed the love-light of our dreams, —
Shifting visions that presage
 The richer life that comes with age.

Wandering lonely through my hall,
 I see a portrait on the wall
That in my memory doth recall
 All she was and still might be.
It was a picture that I drew
 In the golden summer time,
When we both were in our prime
 And I knew that she was mine:

A velvet cap trimmed with lace
 That half hid her blushing face;
A rich bodice, open, free,
 That she brought from Italy;
The skirt was short below the knee;

Raven locks that flowed and spread,
A golden band around her head ;
Olive tints that glowed with red,
A rich toned voice that quivering flung
The accents of her native tongue.

Eyes that gleamed with love or hate
But only in their love were great ;
A soul that only knew its mate —
A soul intensely passionate,
Never stern nor obstinate.

Neath the calm of outward form,
Slept the sunlight and the storm.

What others thought we scarcely knew.

From year to year we nearer grew
Till we were one ; or, only two
When some fancied feeling wrought
A momentary change of thought.

Open stands the cottage door,
And the waving sycamore
Trails its shadows on the floor.

Through the hall nevermore
Gleams the light that once it bore.

I have wandered far and wide,
Seen the rushing of life's tide,
Thought but little, caring less,
What the world might express.
Never have I been the same,
Never to my senses came
Aught that cheered my loneliness.
Still, in every heart is sown
A hope that love will find its own
Somewhere in the great unknown.

All this happened long ago ;
I cannot tell you why 'twas so,
For life is still a mystery.

I only guess, I do not know
Why the angels took from me
All the life there was for me
In the cottage by the sea.

THE PASSING YEARS

I mourn not o'er the passing years,
The vanished hopes, the selfish fears.
Whate'er we fancy there may be
Of hope, or joy, or misery,
They are but ripples on life's sea,
They pass and ne'er return again.
Alike to me the chaff and grain;
They grew together and must fill
Their measured lot of good or ill.
Enough to feel and always know
That all things in their outward flow
Are rich with love, — that nothing's low
Unless we choose to make it so,
Or in our blindness fail to trace
That naught is poor or commonplace.

The earth, the air, the changing skies,
The clouds, the sunshine and the rain,

The countless forms that round us rise,
Are voiceless to an idle brain, —
Within ourselves the splendor lies.
Dull is the soul that cannot see
The beauty and the mystery
Of all that is or yet may be.
All forms may change, and yet change not
The tenor of our inward thought;
While that remains, whate'er may seem,
What we may think, or know, or dream,
Can never change our destiny.

God rules supreme through all the spheres.
Whate'er may come we still retain
Our joy, our sorrow, and our pain.
Beneath the sunlight and the rain,
The chaff shall mingle with the grain,
And all our hopes and joys and fears
Shall blossom in the coming years.

WHO KNOWS THE END?

From out the unseen world there springs,
In wondrous beauty, all living things —
A countless host, whose onward trend
Is through all time. Who knows the end?

Who comprehends the mighty force
That swung the planets on their course,
And through the realms of endless space
Still guides and holds them in their place?

Who knows the time they first begun
Their ceaseless journey round the sun,
Or aught of that sidereal sweep
That bears them through the boundless deep?

Still swells the tide, within, without.
Whether we fear, or hope or doubt,
Resistless rolls the mighty flow
Of life. The end, — ah, who can know?

THERE IS NO PAST

There is no past. The future lies
A blinding mist before our eyes.
No footprints mark the unseen trail
That leads us down the shadowy vale.

Still on we press. With hopes and fears
We watch the coming of the years,
And here and there, thro' rifts between
Some parting cloud, the light is seen.

FEAR NOT

Fear not the gloom, 'tis but a shroud
That veils the light, — a passing cloud
That trails and drifts and drops its rain;
The parched earth drinks and laughs again.
What is for thee, accept, retain,
'Tis thine, — for thee all else is vain.

Think not that when the waning light
Of evening fades and blinds thy sight
That all is wrong, or aught impure;
The white light, only, shall endure.
Look to thyself. What thou canst see
Is what thou art, — a part of thee.

All fraud, all wrong that we call sin,
Or think so, springs from within.
Our acts are past beyond recall;
Love throws its mantle over all.
Our seeming sins, our faults, are due
To baffled thoughts, — the spirit's force
Deflected in its outward course.

LOVE RULES SUPREME

In all that makes a healthy life
 There is no pomp or jealous strife.
Love rules supreme and self-conceit
 Is crushed like weeds beneath the feet.
We grope about and aimless move
 Until our hearts are filled with love ;
Then comes the dawn, the rosy light
 That lifts the shadows of the night,—
The withered hopes, the ghastly fears
 That journey with our waning years.
The pathway to the unseen world
 Is full of hope, of joys untold ;
With love's rich bloom, with fragrant air,
 Unselfish deeds and silent prayer.
Who seeks to climb some other way
 Will tarry long, will go astray ;
For love alone can point the way.

WE SLEEP, — WE WAKE

Our life while here is but a sleep
Where weird forms around us sweep,
Unreal as the fitful gleams
That haunt us in our fevered dreams,
These ghostly things have swayed and swung
All life since first the world begun,
And, shadow-like, where'er we tread
They fill us with a nameless dread.

We yearning reach only to find
That to all else our eyes are blind,
And yet at times there comes a gleam
Of something more than idle dream;
A still small voice, so far away,
That whispers 'tween the night and day;
A gleam of morn with golden ray.

The unborn child, what can it know
Of all the restless fear and doubt
That marks the changing world without?
As little do we know or see
Of what the other life may be.

We sleep, — we dream, but who can say
That in this strange dramatic play
He sees the light or knows the way?
Alike the rayless gloom of night,
The sun's fierce glare that blinds our sight.
We think, but know not what is right
And o'er a life not understood,
In our conceit, our selfish mood,
We draw the line 'tween bad and good.

Not for their own, but others' guilt
The heathens' burning hell was built.
Satanic thoughts that flowed and run
O'er all the earth when it was young,

The dreary song that Milton sung,
Like storm-lit clouds they intervene
And trail and drift and drop between
Our visions of the life unseen.
Not for the few was Heaven designed
But for the good of all mankind.
Through unknown space the world shall sweep
Regardless of our troubled sleep.
Deem not the evil thou dost fear
Can follow thee to yonder sphere.

As drops the husk that folds the grain,
We drop our sorrows and our pain,
And upward we return again
To that pure life from whence we came.
We sleep, — we wake, — but nevermore
Do we return to this vague shore
To dream the life that once we bore.

THE LAST LEAF

Sitting by my evening fire,
Cheerful-blazing, open fire,
While the autumn leaves are falling
And the mournful winds are calling,
Wailing o'er the passing year,
In my memory recalling
Friends who once to me were dear.
Full of hope and life we started
In the opening of our day;
One by one they have departed,
Fading, drooping by the way.

Thoughtfully, alone I'm sitting
With the shadows round me flitting;
Dusky forms that rise and fall
Slide along the vacant wall,
Weird phantoms that retire
With the waning of the fire.

Welcome was the manly strife,
Building up a stronger life.
Brave we fought, or stood at bay
Over things that blocked our way,
Caring nothing for the play
Of idle thoughts that round us lay.
All of life is but expression
Of the life we call progression
In its changing outward flow,
Little of it do we know.

Why should I grieve o'er the departed,
O'er the friends who with me started?
Conscious of their sense of duty,
Of the fullness and the beauty
Of their lives from day to day,
Without doubts, without fears,
Trusting to the coming years,
Brave they fought and passed away.

Sitting by my evening fire,
Cheerful-blazing, open fire,
While the autumn leaves are falling,
In my mind I am recalling
All the love that came to me.
Not in sadness do I see
The last leaf trembling on the tree.

PSEUDO SCIENCE

*The gods have ceased to play their pranks,
But in their place the modern cranks
Rush in to fill the vacant ranks.*

PSEUDO SCIENCE

PRELUDE

“ Everything from a clam.”

—Motto of the elder Darwin.

Science opes her little doors,
Shows you walking on all fours,
Pointing out the fancied gain
Of fooling with a monkey's brain.
Round the scientific platter,
With their microbes and their matter,
How they grin, how they chatter.
Like cannibals around their fires,
They are eating up their sires.
Science shows you everywhere,
From a microbe to a bear.

On the plains of Arizona
There were horses without owner, —
Little horses that had toes.

In the bad lands they have laid
Ever since the flood was stayed.

Every savant thinks he knows
Why it was they lost their toes,¹
And why the bird that chirps and sings
Was once a crawling, hideous thing.

With a magnifying glass
They will prove you've been an ass.

They err but little if they say
Not you, but they, have gone that way.

Slimy monsters whirl and swish,

Chase each other for a kiss.

Divine affection in an oyster,

Such as angels fain would foster.

All the potency of our being

That in our lives we are seeing
Was in the bivalve long ago:

Burst his shell, — the overflow
Made us women, made us men,

Made us all that we have been.

On their scientific scroll,
Running downward through the whole,
In the microbe there must be
Everything that comes to thee.
There is no question now about it;
Not a scientist will doubt it, —
In a little drop of slime
Lies the world we call sublime;
Lies the promise of a nation;
Lies the secret of Creation.

Comes the scientific scholar,
With his spacious mouth to swallow
All this great philosophy.
When you've played your little rôle
In a body without a soul
They will dump you in a hole,
And the world shall roll and swing.
Whether it be fall or spring,
Always comes the same old thing.

Neither man, nor saint, nor devil,
All their theories can unravel.
If you take one for a sample
You will find that he is ample
To fully prove his heritage
Somewhere along on history's page.
Down the dim, uncertain trail
You will find he lost his tail,
Not through design or force of will,
But through sliding down a hill.
Lost his peerage and his steerage;
Has been wabbling ever since
With his lack of common sense.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Of all the things that vex the brain
And turn and twist and come again,
There's nothing like the soulless fad
Of scientific thoughts run mad.

For every science has its share
Of little men, and here and there
Like owls they blink and wink and stare, —
A mushroom growth that taints the air.
What wonder then that everywhere,
In all the colleges and schools,
There's lots of scientific fools?

And this recalls my ancient friend
Who knew all things from end to end.
A kinder man you could not find,
But he was Darwin, soul and mind.
He could not see how 'twas we grew
From microbes up, yet well he knew,
Through evolution, it was true.
And yet at times he had a doubt
How all these things could come about.
He turned all theories upside down,
Like Hodgson, stretched them till they broke,¹
And in the end was sure he found
Prenatal influence was no joke.

But Science claims what you indite
Must be set down in black and white.

It makes no difference what you think,
All must be welded, link by link,
Until you have a perfect chain
Of honest facts that will remain.

Our ancient friend now earnest sought
Some way to prove his new-found thought.
He scorned to lend a helping hand
To that great horror of the land
Where scientists, to gain their facts,
Must torture guinea pigs and cats.
He built a room, the walls were white;
He had no doubt that radium plays
A fertile part in our sun's rays,

So through the day and through the night
He lit it with this new-found light,
And when all things were 'ranged aright,
He sought a tenant for his cell.

He wandered long, a weary time,
Before he found from Afric's clime
A woman who was black as night,
And straightway placed her in his cell.
And I have often heard him tell,
He dressed himself in spotless white;
No darkness on her vision fell;
He fed her on green food and rice,
And it is said that once or twice
He frightened her with his white mice.

The weeks, the months, went slowly by,
The winter fled, the spring drew nigh,
The chilly wind turned fresh and mild;
And on one morn she had a child, —
Strange to say 'twas creamy white.

No woolly scalp upon its head, —
The hair was golden, titian red.
It was a lovely sight to see
This little waif, this mystery;

Its dimpled cheeks, its dreamy eyes,
 As blue as are the summer skies;
Its sunny face, its golden hair, —
 A gleam of life undimmed by care;
A dreamy sense of loveliness
 That one may feel but not express.

Now there was hurrying to and fro
 That all the scientists might know
About this strange prenatal show.
 Of this great crowd that gathered there
The Psychical Research had its share.
 With looks profound
 They gathered round,
 Nor made a sound
Till Dr. Hodgson scratched his head
 And, turning to friend Hyslop, said
It was a spiritual conception.
But Hyslop wisely raised the question
 That it was muscular suggestion;

And Dr. Hudson thought 'twas plain
The action of a dual brain.
What Savage thought he would not tell
Until 'twas made respectable.²
Shades of the past! Have we forgot
The gentle Nazarene who taught
The beauty of all living thought,
And, careless of all scorn and strife,
For love of truth laid down his life?
Can we descend to lower plane,
And in our self-respect retain
One word of praise for those who boast
Their fear of Mrs. Grundy's ghost?
From every new-found thought that floats
They hide behind her petticoats.
Our ancient friend now did insist,
He'd found the link that Darwin missed;
That evolution could be wrought
Only through prenatal thought;

That, if you wished to change a nation,
It must begin with its gestation.

I waive the moral of the scene,
Of what is now, what might have been;
Nor do I wish nor here desire
To raise the question of its sire.
Professor Loeb, who knows these things,
Will tell you how all life begins,³
For he is hot upon the trail
To prove how useless is the male.

The tale that's told how Eve was made
While Adam in his slumber laid
By scientists is counted out,
For now 'tis known beyond a doubt
That no one saw the spare rib sprout.
Her restlessness, her wily tricks
That got poor Adam in a fix
Show that the story was a fib;
Such things require more than one rib.

True science heeds not right or wrong ;
In research, only, is it strong.
It is enough for them to know
That all these things may come and go.
Not here alone these changes flow,
For in the sunny South, we know,
Where virtue waves her loving hand
O'er all the children of the land,
Such things can be. 'Tis only fright
That turns one half the negroes white.

In vain I warned my ancient friend
Against this scientific trend.
He claimed the honor of his birth,
His Saxon blood, his pride, his worth,
And scorned the man who fain would say
These changes came some other way.

Now, if you don't believe this tale,
And think these things cannot prevail,
Just call to mind the little tricks
That Jacob played with his peeled sticks.

You cannot, if you would, discredit
Or doubt his scientific merit,
His wondrous plan of changing brute and man;
For nowhere else on history's pages,
Among the bosses or the sages,
Can you find another case where wages
Have been paid by such a tackle
As Jacob made with Laban's cattle.
Nought is changed from days of yore
When Jacob, with his subtle lore,
O'er the teaching and the preaching
Of that wily sage of yore,
Fought his scientific battle,
Fought with Laban for his cattle,
Winning out the little score
That his double marriage bore.

Who use their brains all on one side
May find the other mystified;
And ten to one at such expense
They lose all claim to common sense,

And o'er some scientific fad
In self-conceit they all run mad.
Pseudo science rides rough-shod
O'er all our hopes of man or God.
No matter where,
They all are there,
The million germs that fill the air,
And through our life they warp and weave
A deadly blight in air we breathe,
And poison all our dreams of bliss
With thirty microbes in a kiss.⁴

Worse than any Spanish blister
Is the kissing of a sister;
Never touch your father or your mother,
Never come too near your lover;
Ten feet from him take your stand,
You may drop upon your knees,
Throw him kisses if you please,
But never dare you touch his hand;⁵

There's a million devils greeting
All such silly sort of meeting.
But these are nothing to the find
Of Dr. Hudson's dual mind.
You nurse your manhood and your pride
Only to find that side by side
Sub-conscious self in you resides.
The dreams of love that once you knew
Have faded like the morning dew.
Sub-conscious self in Mary's life
Refuses now to be your wife,
And so you have domestic strife, —
The certain trend, the fruitful source
That paves the way to all divorce.

But should you marry both, why, then,
What can you say of Mormon men?
Or if, perchance, you are a lover,
It's possible you may discover
That all your love is but a fraction
Of that great law that sets in action
The microbes that produce attraction;

That your passion buds and swells
With the building of new cells.⁶

She whom you think you are seeing
May be quite another being;

Tho' she walk in all her splendor,
Great full eyes, so deep and tender,
Stand aside, — she'll not surrender
While the microbes can defend her

Like a swarm of bees unseen,
Circling round their stately queen.

Are you plucky? Dare you risk
All your life on things like this?

Cold the hand that turns the page
Of this scientific age.

Nero played when Rome was burning;

Pseudo science, always scheming
With a life that's only seeming,

Scorns and laughs with its upturning
Of all for which our hearts are yearning.

Soars the vulture through the air ;
In the distance he looks fair,
But his beak with blood is red
From his feasting on the dead.

Icebound, silent, is the river,
With its chill we tremble, shiver ;
Still it floweth now as ever,
Floweth to the boundless sea.

None but fools can think it never
From its bondage can be free, —
In the sunshine it shall quiver,
Laughing, reach its destiny.

Great is science in its learning,
Searching all things, crawling, squirming ;
All its savants now are turning,
Turning handsprings o'er each other,
Over things they may discover.
Shouting, " All the world's ablaze
With the little radium rays."

Sun and stars, they still may render
Glory to the day and night,

But they know that all their splendor
Must be due to this new light.

But greater still that lying elf

That Hudson calls sub-conscious self.⁷

If what he says proves to be true

Then in yourself there dwelleth two:

How can you tell which one is you?

Far away in Life's mid-ocean,

Where the waves have ceased their motion

And the stars have lost their light,

'Neath the hopeless gloom of night,

Where no friendly hand is beckoning,

Where the pilot's lost his reckoning,

Freighted with its speculations, —

Dreary, gloomy speculations,

That have cursed the life of nations, —

Drifts this scientific bark,

Crumbling, rotting, in the dark.

THE VOYAGERS

In *The Voyagers* I have touched lightly on one of the most remarkable fads that has ever clouded the intellect of man.

Men of character and extensive culture have allowed their imaginations to run riot, resulting in elaborate treatises on a subject so simple that a child could understand all that is of value in it.

It is its simplicity that has misled them.

Did the grim old boatman Charon,
 Ferrying souls across the Styx,
Dream they would return and swear on
 All these scientific tricks?

THE VOYAGERS

INTRODUCTION

Armed and spoiling for a fight
Rides our famed Quixotic knight,
Ready for all fancied ills,
Mistaking mediums for windmills.

Of all the men in history
Who have braved the Northern Sea
Looking for the Arctic Pole,
None could ever fill the rôle
Of these men who claim to be
Members of a great Society:¹
This mighty, scientific band
That wrecked their boat upon the sand.
In their conceit they held the portal
To the land we call immortal.

The Secretary kept the key,
And for the modest little fee
Of twenty dollars in advance,
He put the medium in a trance
That you might see into eternity.
He would not tell from his subletting
How much of boodle he was getting,²
But made it plain you could get in
By bribing Peter with the tin.

Alone he trod the battered deck,
The sole survivor of the wreck,
And now as in the days of yore
He stands again beside the door
Of that veiled land he would explore.

To trusty friends he sends a greeting
That there is one who wants a meeting;
And if you wish to save your fame
By masking in another name,
He'll introduce you as John Smith,
Or Jones, or any kind of myth.

And should you fail to understand
The spirit writing in shorthand,
He'll read it for you and translate
All he can get through his pate
Of this vague hypnotic state.

With open palms he claims the cash
If you would share his spiritual hash.

Like rippling laughter runs the story,
Runs the great Munchausen story,
Of the ponderous blows he dealt
On some fakir medium's pelt.
A hundred scalps hung from his belt,
While from his spear aloft he swung
The Russian woman's cloven tongue.³

He who is hunting for a thief
Will find the difference so brief
That each could take the other's place
And still continue in the race.
The fraud or ill that he may find
Is but a reflex of his mind.

Great is the scientific pull:
All the anxious seats are full
And you must wait and take your chance
If you would join his psychic dance.
If there are spirits, do they know
About this strange mesmeric show,
And are they, as our hero claims,
The victims of such pseudo names?
In his weak uncanny prying
Into things he is denying,
Does it pay one, after dying,
To come back and prove the lying?

THE ADVANCE

They came in a strange hypnotic dream
And paddled their boat up a little stream.
They paddled by night, they paddled by day,
Through ghostly frauds that haunted the way,
Till the pilot refused any longer to guide
Their mystical boat to the other side,
Where those called dead are supposed to reside.

Beached on the sand not far away,
High and dry their frail boat lay
With the men, who, all alone,
Were hunting for the Great Unknown.

In the years that they were out
Chasing fraud along the route,
Once or twice, it has been said,
They had chatted with the dead.
Not through muscular attraction,
Nor through telepathic action,
But through the pilot's understanding
Of the thing that she was handling,

Things the spirit once held dear
While dwelling on this mundane sphere;
Strange hypnotic seeing
Of another state of being.

Then, rushing, came the fake reporters,
These wonderful truth supporters,
A hustling, rustling, little band
That scatters scandal o'er the land,
Cutting up their frantic capers
Gathering garbage for the papers.
You can't wink, nor think, nor say
A single word, but that next day
It is printed in the papers.
Useless are your judges or your courts;
If you are charged with any crime,
With their garbled-up reports,
Without reason, without rhyme,
They will try you every time,
And convict you of the crime.

When this woman, seeking glory,
Pumped the pilot for her story,⁴
And, with great headlines, sold that story,
Like a rocket in the air
Burst the scientific scare.

Blazed the papers through the nation
With the woman's indiscretion,
With the silly explanation,
And the people all ran riot
O'er the statements of the pilot.

Never hound on blood intent
Was more hot upon the scent,
Than these hustling, rustling rakers,
Seeking rubbish for their papers,
When they struck the dusky trail,
Leading down the misty vale,
Of that wondrous psychic band
That for many years, 'twas said,
Had been hunting for the dead,
Found them stranded on the sand.

Then, with eagle feathers spread,
Danced a pow-wow o'er the dead,
And in the papers, great and small,
Told the story of their fall.
When the howling tom-tom ceased
And they had smoked the pipe of peace,
With the pilot off the deck,
They cared little for the wreck,
Or whether fraud or self-conceit
Had paved the way for their retreat,
But they would give the simple tale
Of one who followed on their trail.

Their boat was battered and shattered and worn,
And never since the world was born,
On land or on sea was such a crew.
Doctors and ministers, not a few,
And one professor who claimed to know
Something about a dear "white crow."
They wandered here, they wandered there,
And in their blindness and despair

Some thought they heard George Pelham swear
That Imperator was not there.⁵

Confused and dark to them the way.

What could they do? They could not stay,
And some were sure their wornout boat
With such a crowd could never float.

From spectacles to slipper shoes,⁶
That once they thought were good to use
To tempt the spirits back to tell

Whether they dwelt in heaven or hell,
Were gathered up and thrown ashore.

With tug and pull and bending oar
They gain the stream and drift once more.

One thing remains within the boat —
'Twas Hyslop's book. They all agreed

It was so light it could not sink,
And come what might, if there was need,
A hundred men could on it float.

The slimy snake slid through the grass
And reared his head to see them pass;

The croaking frog crept from his den,
Climbed up the rocks and winked, and then
He laughed and croaked and winked again.

THE RETREAT

All day they drift adown the tide
Nor heed the banks on either side.
Sad Hyslop sits in the stern and steers;
His harlequin mask is wet with tears,⁷
For they neither see, nor hear, nor know
What will become of their dear white crow.⁸
And each unto the other said
“There is no life where hope is dead.”
What else they thought no one can tell.
The noiseless paddles rose and fell,
And like a phantom in a dream
They drifted down the Lethe stream.
The lazy wind that all day long
Had slept beneath the summer sea
Now woke to life, and rising strong

Drove round the boat the swelling tide,
The restless waves that sobbed and sighed.

The sun dropped down, the full round moon

With hazy light climbed up the sky,
And from the cove the laughing loon

Rode on the swell and turned aside
To mock them with her mournful cry.

The weird darkness round them spread;
The bittern from her weedy bed

Rose on the wing and booming fled.
All unseen by mortal eye

Swept the curlew through the sky,
Piercing the darkness with her cry,

While the plover's plaintive notes
O'er the gloomy water floats,

And like some lonely thing accursed
The hooting owl called from the glen;

The fox came down to quench his thirst
And rushed in terror to his den:

'Tis said he ne'er came back again.

Black were the clouds where set the sun,
And high the cliffs that overhung
The sea that rolled and swung, —
The swollen sea that dashed and sprung
Upon the rocks that madly flung
The angry waves that one by one
Charged up the cliff, then backward run
With muffled sound like booming gun.

The ghostly fraud that once was theirs⁹
No longer haunts them with its cares,
And o'er the prow, with anxious eyes
They watch the misty clouds that rise ;
For far away in the outer bay
Their frail ship lay, and rolled and swung,
And this the song that Hodgson sung :
“ The piper may pipe, the dancers play,
The silly folks may go astray,
For the torch we lit to light the world
In utter darkness has been hurled,
And never again, ah ! never more
Will it light our path to the unknown shore.”

And bending low they all cried, “ Oh,
What will become of our dear white crow ! ”

It was a fearful thing to see

These men who nursed their misery,
For they with one accord did think,
As rose the swell, that they would sink.
Then Hodgson said, with hopeful look,
“ *Almighty* friend, hast thou thy book ?
If so what care we for this boat ? —

For come what may we all shall float.”
“ But see, my scientific friend,

These ugly clouds that o’er us bend,
And like a mountain torrent free

Rolls and swells the mighty sea.
Canst thou with thy philosophy,
With thy strength, thy magic skill,
Bid these wild waves to be still ?

Fifty thousand words or more,¹⁰
Freighted with thy fancied lore,
Would bridge this sea from shore to shore.

Let the angry waves rejoice
With the music of thy voice."

Just then a voice broke loud and clear —

"Hello, old chap, by Jove I'm here.

What can I do for this sad crew ?

Give me the helm and I will steer."

And all began to think and feel

That they were safe. Then Hyslop took
And read a chapter from his book.

The sinking boat rose on its keel ;

The listening wind, a moment still,

Now angry grew, and loud and shrill,
With fitful gusts it struck anew

Their helpless craft that onward flew,
And 'neath the darkness of the night

It passed forever out of sight.

The years have gone, the glint and gleam

Of sunlight dances on the stream.

The wireless telegraph

Has left no record of their path

And there is little now to show
Of what took place so long ago.
Standing on the sheltered lea,
Looking out upon the sea
Where the waves are breaking free,
Not a vestige canst thou see,
Not a whisper comes to thee
Telling where they now may be.
They may have reached the outer bay
And in their frail bark sailed away.
Yet some believe they all were drowned,
And one old fellow, tramping round,
Swears that he saw, not far away,
A strange black crow upon the shore
Pick up the mask that Hyslop wore
And, crow-like, bear it to her nest.
And as each chicken broke its shell
The forest echoed with the yell
Of mother crow, who, in delight
Saw none were black, but all were white!
But in her joy she failed to find,
While none were black, they all were blind.

Unlike the tale the farmer told
Of that poor man whose stomach rolled
With four black crows it could not hold, —
Which in the end proved something dark, —
These new-fledged birds rose like the lark.
If in their splendor they survive,
For one white crow there may be five.
And now these scientists are testing
All kinds of birds that change in nesting.
They seek to prove, — a hopeless task, —
That naught was due to Hyslop's mask.
They feared, in time, they could not tell
Which one it was they loved so well.

If you believe in annihilation,
Or what is worse, reincarnation,
It is a goodly thing to know
That you were once a dear white crow,
Beloved by ministers and sages
Who wrote of you a thousand pages,
And thus your fame swung down the ages.

The world will turn, the tide will flow,
The changing seasons come and go,
But what can Science ever know
Of the beauty of that love
Ever flowing from above?

Noah trusted to his dove.

Had he been fooling with the crow,
Do you think,— can you show,—
That he could have hung his hat
On the top of Ararat?

NOTES

NOTES

PRELUDE

Note 1, page 106 :

Every savant thinks he knows
Why it was they lost their toes.

The finding of these skeletons led scientists to believe that they had discovered the evolution of the modern horse. To attain their present form they had to drop their toes.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Note 1, page 109 :

“ Like Hodgson, stretched them till they broke.”

Dr. Hodgson is reported as saying that he would stretch all other theories till they broke before he would accept the phenomena of spirit communion.

Note 2, page 113 :

“ What Savage thought he would not tell
Until 'twas made respectable.”

“ One of the first, and as a preliminary, one of the most important results of this Society [for Psychical Research], so far, has been to make the study respectable.” — *Minot J. Savage*.

Note 3, page 114:

“Professor Loeb, who knows these things,
Will tell you how all life begins.”

Professor Loeb announces the discovery of the propagation or continuation of animal life independent of the male organism, thereby taking the question of immaculate conception out of the arena of public discussion and placing it in the line of scientific facts.

According to his discovery, we are fast approaching an age in which the laws governing the relations between the sexes must undergo a radical change.

Note 4, page 117:

“Thirty microbes in a kiss.”

A German Scientist has found that there are no less than thirty different kinds of microbes in the average human mouth.

Note 5, page 117:

“Never dare you touch his hand,”

M. Crouzel, a French chemist, has discovered that there are 83,450,900 bacilli in the average hand, the shaking of which is a frightful source of spreading disease.

Note 6, page 119:

“That your passion buds and swells
With the building of new cells.”

Scientists have found that cells that build up our bodies have their periods of growth and decay. That decay of these cells leads to old age and death. By injecting into the system blood, or serum, from a young and vigorous person, a new order of cells is introduced, which supersedes the old and prolongs life. By repeating the process, life on earth may become continuous.

This is not a new discovery, only a new application of an old one. Fruit-growers have known for centuries that by grafting an old tree with young and vigorous scions the life and fertility of the tree is prolonged.

Note 7, page 121:

“But greater still that lying elf
That Hudson calls sub-conscious self.”

Thomas Jay Hudson, Ph.D., LL.D., in his book, “The Law of Mental Medicine,” makes the discovery of a duplex mental organism — that there are two distinct individualities occupying your body at the same time, which he calls the objective self and subjective self. The latter is governed entirely by suggestion and is totally devoid of moral responsibility. The atrophy of the objective self is the cause of all crime.

“THE VOYAGERS”

Note 1, page 125:

“Members of a great Society.”

“It goes without saying that no member is in any way bound by the convictions of another. The Society then, as such, has no opinions. It has accepted no theories, has come to no conclusions.”
— *M. J. Savage*.

If it has no opinions, no conclusions, no responsibility, pray what is it?

Note 2, page 126:

“He would not tell from his sub-letting
How much boodle he was getting.”

No sooner did the Secretary get possession of the medium than he proceeded to sub-let her to outside parties at from ten to twenty dollars a séance.

It is difficult to understand this effort to push Mrs. Piper to the front above all other mediums except on the theory of ignorance or an attempt to place a fictitious value on her services.

From reports of her séances, there seems to be but little in the manifestations beyond the ordinary mesmeric subject. Her constant demands for articles that have been used by deceased persons and the results obtained therefrom are psychometric in character and do not necessarily carry any proof of returning spirits.

Note 3, page 127:

“The Russian Woman’s cloven tongue.”

According to M. Sage, a French Author, he was a terrible enemy to what he thought was mediumistic fraud. His masterstroke was in going to India for the purpose of exposing Madame Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy.

Note 4, page 131:

“When this woman, seeking glory,
Pumped the Pilot for her story” —

When the woman reporter obtained from Mrs. Piper the confession that she had broken with the Society, — that she wanted nothing more to do with Dr. Hodgson, and that she did not believe that spirits expressed themselves through her organism, it swept through the country like a tornado. It was in vain to point out the fact that this confession did not in any way affect the object for which the Society was formed. The attack was only an excuse for holding up to ridicule the do-nothing character of a Society that had promised so much.

Note 5, page 133:

“Some thought they heard George Pelham swear
That Emperor was not there.”

Two of Mrs. Piper’s guides. For the character of these supposed controls see Professor Hyslop’s

book, page 300, where Dr. Hodgson is endeavoring to arrange a sitting for Professor Hyslop:

“Pelham. — ‘He asked me to speak and ask you whether I could help you out a bit when your almighty friend arrives. You may count on me.’
H. — ‘By Jove, I am glad to see you back, old chap, I can tell you.’”

Note 6, page 133:

“From spectacles to slipper shoes.”

These and other articles were used by Professor Hyslop in his sittings with Mrs. Piper.

Note 7, page 134:

“His harlequin mask was wet with tears.”

In Professor Hyslop’s first séances for investigation of Mrs. Piper he used a mask.

Note 8, page 134:

“What will become of their dear white crow.”

Mrs. Piper seems to have challenged the highest admiration of many of the members of the Society for Psychical Research. Mr. Savage called her a most wonderful woman, and one of the ex-presidents, who has never been known to gush over women, scientifically expresses his interest in her thus:

“If you wish to upset the law that all crows are black, you must not seek to show that no crows are; it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white. My own white crow is Mrs. Piper.”

Dr. Hodgson is authority for the statement that "Imperator," one of Mrs. Piper's controls, claimed that the indiscriminate experimenting with Mrs. Piper's organism should be stopped; that it was a battered and worn machine.

Note 9, page 136:

"The ghostly fraud that once was theirs."

The wholesale charge of fraud, made by members of this Society against Spiritualists and mediums, seems to have been a two-edged sword. It is no longer a question as to which has been hit the hardest.

Note 10, page 137:

"Fifty thousand words or more."

Professor Hyslop's book contains six hundred and forty pages, or about two hundred and sixty thousand words, in a vain attempt to explain a dozen séances with Mrs. Piper.

The conclusion which he arrived at after so much labor is briefly stated on page 295 of his book, "The main object here is not to convince the reader that Spiritism is the only hypothesis to be entertained, but that it is rational to suppose it as one of the possible explanations."

When it is remembered that "outside of pure mathematics nothing is impossible," this profound statement must have greatly impressed all scientific investigators.

NOTE

For more than fifty years I have been a close student of what is known as spirit phenomena, in all its phases, and I have yet to find any evidence that it is not what it claims to be.

I am not, however, in sympathy with much that passes under that name, nor am I especially attracted to the work of the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research.

However honest its members may be, I regard it as little more than a respectable humbug. They have not sought to establish the truth of the phenomena, but to prove that it is something else.

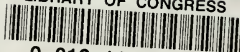
Over the well-known character and undisputed honesty of Mrs. Piper they have thrown the insinuation that what comes through her mediumship may be due to her second personality; whatever that may be.

If this second personality exists, it must be a part of herself, posing in the séance as individuals claiming to be spirits returning from another life.

If they have any scientific evidence to prove the existence of this second personality, they should have stated the facts and warned the public against the fraud. If not, then their own reputation and not Mrs. Piper's is at stake.

Her reputed assertion that she wanted nothing more to do with the society, and especially with Dr. Hodgson, was the awakening of her better sense of womanhood. Her return to the commercial relations, supposed to command the open door between the two worlds, must have been due either to avarice or to hypnotic influence.

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